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THE GROWTH OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES FROM 1820 TO 1840

BY
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The religious origins of America were in the main Protestant. At the time of the formation of the Republic "there were very few Catholics found in the country, and only in one or two spots."* The few who had settled in the British Colonies were an almost negligible minority. Among the signers of the Declaration of Independence but one was a Roman Catholic. Baltimore was the only city on the Atlantic seaboard containing a fair proportion of Catholic inhabitants. Small communities of French Catholics were to be found west of the Alleghenies, but the rapid settlement of the Ohio Valley by Protestant emigrants from the older states reduced the Catholics in that locality to an even smaller minority.

In general friendly relations prevailed between Catholics and Protestants. Under the Constitution Catholics were entitled to the same religious liberty enjoyed by other sects. Their numerical inferiority

* Report of Bishop England to Propaganda. Translated from the portfolios of the Irish College at Rome. Records of the American Catholic Historical Society, (Philadelphia, 1897) VIII, p. 311.

rendered them politically insignificant, and their proselyting zeal was directed towards the Indians. Protestants, then, had nothing to fear from their fellow citizens of the older faith. "The truth can be proclaimed freely and can triumph in America," writes the Superior of the Jesuit Missions in 1818, "since it has not there to contend with one of the greatest obstacles which elsewhere hinders the propagation of the Christian faith, namely, religious intolerance and the persecution of idolatrous governments. ----- A person acquainted with ecclesiastical history is startled on hearing the names of certain sects, and shudders to recall the wild doctrines held by their founders: but they are quite changed in our day. Many individuals, it is true, bear the evil name of those sectaries, but they are far removed from the primitive spirit of the sect. You will find them gentle in character, upright in their lives, polite in their manners (this virtue, however, is more or less common to all there) towards all classes of people, whatever may be their real internal persuasions."*

* Father John Grassi, *The Catholic Religion in the United States in 1818*. American Catholic Historical Researches, (Philadelphia, 1891) VIII, p. 311.

In a few states, notably in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, some political disabilities remained, and "Catholics venturing to attempt to make permanent homes generally found themselves surrounded by a hostile community which regarded them with an evil eye."* Yet even in New England, the first bishop by prudence, tact, and zeal while a missionary priest, had conquered the esteem and respect of the Protestant community amid which he had labored.** Instances of good feeling were even more frequent in the western settlements. In 1818 when the Catholic priest of St. Louis set out upon a journey to Rome, he was presented with a formal address by his Protestant fellow-citizens as a testimonial of their respect and an expression of their cordial wishes for a pleasant journey and a speedy return to his labors among them.

The hierarchy in the United States, in 1820, included the Archbishop of Baltimore and seven bishops. Before 1808, the diocese of Baltimore extended from Maine to Georgia, and as far west as the Mississippi

* J. G. Shea, History of the Catholic Church in the United States, (New York, 1890), III, p. 113.

** Ibid, III, p. 109.

River.* In that year, three new sees were erected east of the Alleghenies, at Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, while the entire territory between the mountains and the river was assigned to the Bishop of Bardstown, Kentucky. All territory belonging to the United States west of the Mississippi remained under the charge of the Bishop of New Orleans. By a further division of the diocese of Baltimore, in 1820, new sees were created at Richmond, Virginia, and Charleston, South Carolina. The number of priests is more difficult to determine. A Catholic writer estimates that, "in 1822 the number of churches throughout the whole United States did not much exceed one hundred; and in some of the States, not only was there no church but a priest was never seen by their scattered populations."** The large majority of the clergy were of French birth, and of the remainder the greater number had been educated in French seminaries. Many spoke English with difficulty, some not at all. Of English speaking priests there were a few Americans and steadily increasing numbers of Irish. An occasional German

* Ibid, III, p. 107

** J. F. Maguire, *The Irish in America*, (New York, 1868) p. 374

priest was to be found in the valleys of western Pennsylvania.* Some of these priests were members of religious orders. There were, however, few community houses, and it is fair to estimate that a large proportion of the clergy were secular priests.

Difficulties of travel and the great extent of diocesan territory effectually prevented any concerted action among the higher clergy. There was no regular intercourse with the Vatican. Bishops and priests were forced by existing conditions to act upon their own initiative, and to rely upon themselves or upon their congregations for the support and advancement of their religion. The Archbishop of Baltimore writes in 1824 to the Archbishop of Quebec, "You and I are in the same boat. For a year past I have received from Rome nothing but a few unimportant papers. I thought I had a good idea of the troubles incident to the episcopate. But I did not know the extent or the weight of them."**

* Petition of Irish Catholics of Lancaster, Pa., 1806. Am. Cath. Hist. Researches (1891) VIII, p. 2.

** Archbishop Maréchal to Archbishop Plessis, Baltimore November 6, 1824. (From the archiepiscopal archives at Quebec.) Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1907), Records, XVIII, p. 457.

Under such circumstances it was inevitable that many should fall away from allegiance to the Church, and that among those who remained a spirit of independence should develop. It was equally inevitable that certain Protestant customs should be adopted by Catholic congregations. In the early years of the nineteenth century two Protestant customs had become well established among American Catholics. It already appeared to them logical and natural that church property should be held by a board of trustees under a charter granted by the state government; and that the lay members of the congregation should have the right to choose their own priest. In frontier communities no one questioned the expediency of these practices. Devout Catholics, finding themselves in a new land without the consolations of their religion, following the example of their Protestant neighbors, formed themselves into congregations, secured by gift or by purchase the site for a church, and, sometimes without even consulting the bishop, invited a priest to live among them. Nor were the bishops averse to such initiative. Unable to supply the growing needs of their dioceses, they were apt, on the contrary, to encourage congregations to look

out for themselves. The offices of the church, baptism, marriage, burial, were of greater import than conformity to canon law.

A new papal policy with regard to American began to take form about 1820, a policy coincident with that of the Holy Alliance. . Under the Napoleonic regime, the Pope had been practically powerless in the Catholic countries in Europe, and the fate of missionary lands like the United States received little attention. Freed from French control in 1814, the Pope was able to resume his authority over the Catholic Church throughout the world. Meanwhile there had grown up among Catholics in America the habit of relying upon their own judgment in matters ecclesiastical as well as political. Loyal to the religious doctrines of their faith, they had adopted distinctly Protestant methods of church management.* The attempt to change the existing system and to bring self-governing congregations under the control of papal and episcopal authority could not fail to bring about conflicts between clergy and laity upon two vital questions. Shall

* Shea, op. cit. III, p. 232

church property be held by the congregation or by the bishop? Shall the bishop or the congregation appoint the priest?

Controversies arose in the early nineteenth century between bishops and congregations concerning the rights of the laity with regard to church property; and the selection of their own priests. The quarrel in St. Mary's Church, Philadelphia, lasting more than a generation, may be studied as a typical instance. In Philadelphia, Catholics had been accustomed from colonial days to enjoy a large measure of freedom, they were richer and more numerous than in some of the other dioceses. * Episcopal control had been lax, and the traditions of the community encouraged independence. For these reasons the conflict in Philadelphia may be regarded as a test case to decide whether bishops or laity should rule the Catholic Church in America. The importance attached by the Vatican to this controversy may be judged by the fact that "In the archives of the Propaganda in Rome are ten large codices filled with documents relating to the Hogan Schism in Philadelphia, from 1821 to 1824; and more than half of two other codices deal

* Shea, Hist. of Cath. Church, III, p. 260.

with the same subject."*

In the first phase of the struggle the two factions were aligned. The bishop, in 1812, appealed to the archbishop for support, "the trustees applied to the Legislature to amend the charter of the church and exclude the clergy from the board of trustees;" both appealed to the congregation, and the bishop succeeded by some means in preventing the desired change in the charter.** Such was the situation when, in 1820, the newly appointed bishop assumed his charge. One of his first official acts was the removal upon technical and canonical grounds of Rev. William Hogan, priest of St. Mary's Church. The real motives for this action seem to have been the recognition of danger to the American Church from the alleged Protestant tendencies of the Rev. Hogan, and the determination of Bishop Conwell to enforce episcopal authority.*** Irish by birth, and French by training, the new bishop was, at seventy-five years of age, entirely unacquainted with American ideals,

* Philadelphia Catholic Historical Briefs
Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1911), Records, XXII, p. 42
Fish, C. R., Guide to the materials for American
History in Roman and other Italian archives. (Washington, D. C. 1911)
** Shea, op. cit., III, p. 215
*** Ibid, III, p. 231

and American methods of church management. Hogan, although also an Irishman, before coming to Philadelphia, had been in charge of a parish in the diocese of New York, and had adjusted himself with characteristic facility to the American habit of dispensing with superfluous formalities. From his point of view, his selection by the trustees of St. Mary's gave him full authority to assume the duties of parish priest.

The trustees retaliated by excluding Bishop Conwell from their board upon the ground that he was not a citizen of the United States. They further defined their position in an address asking for the restoration of Hogan and stating "that St. Mary's Church is the property of the laity, and the clergy are supported by them."* Upon the refusal of the bishop to accede to their demands, the trustees excluded him from the cathedral church and forwarded a direct appeal to Rome. They denounced the suspension of Hogan as "a violent measure not only unsupported by, but contrary to the canons of the Church," and declared that it ought to be immediately with-

* Ibid, III, p. 229., Note, Hogan, An Address to the Congregation of St. Mary's Church, Philadelphia, pp. 19-20.

drawn.* The excommunication of Hogan which followed was ignored both by him and by the trustees who again petitioned the Legislature for an amendment to the charter by means of which the clergy were to be deprived of their seats as members of the board. An act of the Legislature March 20, 1821, authorized the Supreme Court to allow amendments to the charter, but the court in the following year decided adversely to the amendment proposed by the trustees.**

Forcibly prevented from preaching in St. Mary's Church, the bishop took refuge in the little church of St. Joseph which for a time became the Cathedral of Philadelphia. In July 1823, he wrote to the Bishop of Quebec, "The good Catholics here are the best in the world. But the liberals excell in wickedness & heresy. They, the trustees or liberals, still hold the revenues of the church & apply them to political purposes as they please. They deny publicly and in print 'that the government of the church, the mission and appointment of its pastors & the right to judge

* Ibid, III, p. 231

** Ibid, III, p. 242

in cases spiritual & ecclesiastical appertain to the hierarchy, & that these powers can not consistently with Catholic principles be claimed or exercised by lay persons.' These are our words. They declare this to be false doctrine and that, on the contrary, the laity have all power over the clergy, and have a right to hire them and turn them away ad libitum.**

The financial situation of the Bishop was critical. St. Mary's refused to make any contribution for his support, and the income from other churches was insufficient for his urgent needs. He, therefore, appealed to the Bishop of Quebec for aid. Propaganda at the same time authorized the other American bishops to take up collections for the Philadelphia diocese. With money from these sources, a site was purchased for the new cathedral, the title being vested in Bishop Conwell who by that time had become a citizen of the United States.** He also secured from Rev. Francis Neale of Maryland the deed to St. Mary's Church which being duly recorded in

* Bishop Conwell to Bishop Plessis, Philadelphia, July 25th, 1823. (From the Quebec Archives.)
Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1911), Records, XXII, p. 276
** Shea, op. cit., III, p. 249

Philadelphia placed the bishop in an independent position.* By these successful measures, the trustees were induced to reopen negotiations. The general terms of the compromise agreed upon may be gathered from the bishop's notice opening St. Mary's Church for divine service October 11, 1826.

"The trustees are to manage the temporalities according to the Act of Incorporation, and the spiritual concerns shall remain under the care and government of the Bishop to whom the Deposit of the faith and the general discipline of the Roman Catholic Church are entrusted in the diocese of Philadelphia."**

The Bishop of Philadelphia was not the only prelate who found himself confronted with an independent and antagonistic laity. Similar conflicts between bishops and trustees occurred in New York, Boston, Norfolk, Charleston, New Orleans, and St. Louis. The appointment of an Irish bishop to the new see of Richmond brought matters to a focus in that diocese. "There was a Bishop's party and a trustees' party," in Norfolk, "each endeavoring to secure possession of the

* Ibid, III, p. 251, Jesuit Records, Am. Cath. Hist. Researches, III, p. 276

** Ibid, III, 255, Note, U.S. Cath. Miscell. VI, p. 343

church till the civil authorities intervened and twenty-one were arrested."* The new bishop found himself handicapped by the neutral attitude of the government, and by the fact that the legal advantage was upon the side of the trustees. His injudicious handling of the situation emphasized the differences within the church and aroused the resentment of both Protestants and Catholics. It ultimately led to his recall from America.

Before a suitable diocese could be found for him in Ireland, Propaganda suggested the transfer of Bishop Kelly to New York as Coadjutor. "But he had so openly condemned the State Governments in this country for incorporating boards of trustees for Catholic churches" that the Bishop of New York advised against the translation "as likely to increase the troubles in that diocese.** These were already serious enough to warrant anxiety. The Bishop of Louisiana, in March, 1822, writes to the Bishop of Quebec, "It seems that the scandal in New York and Philadelphia

* Ibid, III, 81

** Ibid, III, 186, Note, Bishop Conolly to Propaganda, March 4, 1822

has reached its height. --- I sincerely pity the bishops who have such headstrong spirits to rule in a country where the government gives no support to their authority."* The appointment of a new bishop of New York, in 1826, called forth an open protest from the clergy and the laity of the diocese. Their grounds for objection were stated: first, that his appointment had been made to suit the Archbishop of Baltimore and the Sulpicians; second, that he was a Frenchman and not a citizen of the United States; third, that he had not been chosen from the clergy of New York.** By attempting to have a deed to church property made out in his own name Bishop Dubois precipitated a conflict with the trustees which came to an end only after he had been superseded by an Irish bishop more familiar with the intricacies of the American political system.

Of the bishops in the United States in 1820, one alone was able to meet the trustees with some degree

* Bishop Dubourg to Bishop Plessis, New Orleans, 19 March, 1822. (From the Archiepiscopal Archives of Quebec), Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1908) Records, XIX, p. 199.

** C. G. Herbermann, The Rt. Rev. John Dubois, D.D., Third Bishop of New York, Historical Records and Studies, United States Catholic Historical Society, (New York, 1900), I, p. 311.

of success. The selection of Bishop England for the see of Charleston brought to this country a prelate destined to exert a determining influence upon the development of the Roman Catholic Church. Bishop England was an Irishman of good birth, breeding, and education. "He had been thrown much among men and was able to adapt himself to circumstances."* His dealings with the problems of the Catholic Church in America show tact, resource, and a high degree of political sagacity. His diary and letters reveal a man of strong human sympathy, devotion to the interests of his church, and deep sincerity of purpose. At the time of his appointment, "He was not in good standing with the English Government but it was considered that this would do no harm in the United States."** Throughout his life he maintained an active interest in questions concerning the relations of the Church to the civil government both in Ireland and in America. His skill in avoiding unnecessary controversies, and in steering a safe course through

* Shea, op. cit., III, p. 307

** Ibid, III, 307.

difficult situations led the Vatican to make use of his services, and to rely upon his advice in dealing with American problems.

The proportion of Catholics to Protestants in the diocese of Charleston was small. With this exception the situation confronting Bishop England resembled that in New York and in Philadelphia. Church property was held by trustees, and the few scattered congregations were glad to accept the ministry of any priests who chanced to come among them. The great distance from the cathedral city of Baltimore had effectually limited the bishop's authority to a mere theory. Bishop England in a letter to his friend Judge Gaston summed up the situation in 1823. "In this city" (Charleston), he writes, "we have many pious & good Catholics, but we have some of the most decided infidels that I have ever met,--true graduates of the Philadelphia School who call themselves Catholics--& they have the worst charter that it was the misfortune of a church to be cursed with, contradicting the canon law in about twelve points out of the fifteen or sixteen that it embraces,- nor is it a dead letter. -- I prefer losing the few churches which are in the

Diocese to repeating the scandals which have been here & adding to those which are in Philadelphia. It is folly to attempt raising the edifice of Catholicity upon Calvinistic foundations. I shall not attempt it. I have made a statute from which I shall not suffer any deviation."* The statute here mentioned was entitled "The Constitution of the Roman Catholic Churches of the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia; which are comprised in the Diocese of Charleston and Province of Baltimore, U. S. A.** With this 'Constitution' recognized by the state government, points raised in other states could not be brought forward in South Carolina."***

These spontaneous outbreaks in widely separated localities offer convincing evidence of the independent attitude of lay Catholics throughout the United States. One futile attempt was made by the trustees of St. Mary's, Philadelphia, to organize this resistance toward episcopal authority, and to establish an

* Bishop England to Judge Gaston, Charleston (S. C.), January 9, 1823

Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1897), Records, XVIII, p. 384

** Shea, op. cit., III, 322.

*** Bishop England's "Constitution," (From the Portfolios of the Irish College at Rome), Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1897), Records, VIII, p. 454 ff.

an independent, national church directly under the protection of the Pope. In June 1821, they issued an appeal entitled, "Address of the Committee of St. Mary's Church of Philadelphia, to their brethren of the Roman Catholic Faith throughout the United States of America, on the subject of a reform of certain abuses in the administration of our church discipline"* The tone of this address evinces distinct national feeling, and characteristic hostility to foreign domination. The privileges claimed by the lay party are thus set forth in the Address: "Owing to arbitrary & unjustifiable conduct of certain foreigners sent among us by the Junta or commission directing the Fide Propaganda of Rome imperiously call on us to adopt some measures by which an uniform system may be established for the future regulation of our churches; the propagation of our holy Faith by the nomination and selection of proper pastors from our own citizens from whom alone ought to be chosen our bishops, without our being compelled to depend on persons sent to us from abroad

* Shea, op. cit., III, 237

who have uniformly shown themselves hostile to our institutions. - - - We claim the exclusive right, which has always belonged to the Church, of electing our own pastors & bishops." It was further proposed to send a person to Rome "with full powers & authority from the Catholics of the United States, and enter into a regular & written agreement with our holy Father, the Pope."*

Many influences conspired to prevent the fruition of such a scheme. The plan itself was fundamentally opposed to the doctrine of papal authority, which, since the Council of Trent, had been a fundamental principle of the Roman Catholic Church. Difficulties of travel rendered communication between the dioceses irregular and uncertain. The comparative isolation of Catholic congregations scattered over a Protestant country concentrated the interests of each congregation upon its own local problems. Excessive individualism set up varying standards. Everywhere there was independence, but not all Catholics were equally restive under episcopal rule.

* Ibid, III, 238

The prompt and consistent action of Irish bishops who superseded the more lenient French checked dangerous tendencies in their own dioceses. European missionary societies contributed funds to relieve the bishops from financial embarrassment, and thereby render them independent of lay contributions. Throughout the decade the Vatican manifested an increasing interest in affairs American.

The unpleasant situation in Philadelphia awoke the Vatican to the urgent need of a definite policy for the Church in the United States. The compromise made by the bishop and the trustees in 1826 had satisfied neither party. The trustees effectually nullified its provisions by adding a protest before transmitting it to Rome. There, the matter received careful consideration. Propaganda made it the subject of a special meeting. The agreement was disapproved,* and Bishop Conwell was called to Rome to account for his action. No alternative agreement was, however, suggested. Those familiar with American conditions were disposed to criticise Propaganda for failure to

* Ibid, III, 256, note; Cardinal Capellari, Prefect of Congregation de Propaganda Fide, May 19, 1827

announce an authoritative dictum. Bishop England frankly regretted that "no decisive declaration of principles" had been in the outset sent from Rome.* Bishop Conwell, without waiting for the permission of the Pope, returned to Philadelphia. Although later deprived of the active administration of his diocese, he remained its nominal head until his death in 1842.**

Prior to 1822 all papal briefs sent to this country had been addressed to individual bishops. In that year Pope Pius VII recognized the national character which the church was beginning to assume by addressing a general brief to the hierarchy of the United States.*** This brief was completely ignored by the schismatics in Philadelphia against whom it had been directed. It apparently wrought no change in the lay party within the church. Its provisions were reiterated in a special brief addressed to the Bishop of New Orleans by Pope Leo XII in 1828.**** The

* Ibid, III, 256, note, England's Works, V, p. 209

** Ibid, III, 568

*** Ibid, III, 243

**** Brief of Leo XII to Bishop Rosati, (From the Portfolios of the Irish College at Rome), Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1898), Records p. 29. Translation of same, p. 31 ff.

occasion for this brief was an appeal from Bishop Rosati for instructions in dealing with the trustees of the cathedral in New Orleans. The Pope was "rendered exceedingly solicitous" by the information "that the Lay Trustees of the parish of New Orleans had petitioned the Congress of the United States of North America for power to reject those parish priests whom the Bishop might have appointed without their previous consent and that of the people." This brief sustains the dictum of Pius VII with regard to the trustees in Philadelphia, it disavows the agreement there made, commends Bishop Rosati for his diligence, and in compliance with this request, gives the sanction of apostolic authority to his condemnation of the New Orleans trustees. The passage in the brief which expresses confidence in the government is significant and may here be quoted in full:

"We therefore trust that when you have manifested these our sentiments to the New Orleans Trustees, they, repenting of their crime, will return to their duty, and will bring as much joy by their repentance as they have brought sorrow by their misconduct. But if, (which God forbid,) they obstinately refuse to obey

our commands, we are persuaded that the wise legislators of those Republics, who are obliged and who desire to safeguard the worship also of the Catholic Religion, will reject the petition of said Trustees."*

Another incident may be cited as evidence of the readiness of either party in the Catholic Church to claim the support of the federal government. At the time Bishop Conwell was called to Rome, two priests were ordered to leave the diocese of Philadelphia and to go to Cincinnati where the bishop was a member of their own order. Instead of obeying the command of the Pope they "appealed to the United States Government complaining that their rights as citizens were infringed."** The attitude of the government on this occasion failed to give satisfaction to either side. The two priests, being threatened by the Pope with the deprivation of ecclesiastical faculties, gave up the struggle and returned to Ireland. Some years later Bishop England felt convinced that the action of the government had been inconsistent with the principle of religious liberty guaranteed by the

* Ibid, p. 33

** Shea, op. cit., III, 259

Constitution of the United States. In a letter of February 1830, he wrote, "I have not yet got from the office of the Secretary of State all the documents necessary for me to put forward as I would wish the case of Harrold and Ryan's interference. Daniel Brent, I suspect feels that Mr. Adams got too far into it & does not like to have the proofs fully given. Taney has undertaken to urge him to comply with the spirit of the President's order which I procured to get all the extracts connected with the case, & I do like to report that I have been furnished only with partial extracts lest I might help to have the old gentleman reformed. I do not blame him for his attachment to Mr. Adams, but I can not justify his reluctance to furnish documents so necessary to prevent a repetition of what Mr. Adams has twice done without thinking as Taney says that he was acting against the spirit of the Constitution."*

* Bishop England to Judge Gaston, Charleston, (S. C.), February 25, 1830.
Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1908), XIX, p. 148.

Despite the fact that they were unable to secure the support of the civil government during the trustee conflicts, the Catholic bishops were steadily gaining in authority and influence during the period under consideration. This advance was due, in large measure, to the character of the new bishops sent to the United States. Propaganda exercised considerable discrimination in selecting men of learning, force, and administrative ability to take charge of the new dioceses, and to supersede the passing generation. In nearly every instance the choice fell upon an Irishman. These appointments aroused some resentment among the laity, and among the older French bishops in the United States. The Bishop of New Orleans expressed his dissatisfaction to the Bishop of Quebec. He wrote, in 1822, "Since Cardinal Fontana asked your lordship about the condition of the church in the United States, I shall presume to beg of you --- to add --- the warning that he must mistrust the calumnious reports by which it has been sought to prejudice Propaganda against the French Bishops. --- The great misfortune in all these affairs is that there exists a faction which has a large party in the bureaus of

Rome. The Cardinal Prefect sees only what they show him, hears only what they tell him; and he is besieged by men who are guided by prejudice, or it may be by interest alone."* Jealousy between bishops of two different nationalities could not but hinder the growth of the church in the United States. To the keener members of the hierarchy the need for a closer organic relation between the dioceses was already apparent. Through the persistent efforts of Irish bishops, Propaganda was at length induced to adopt measures having that end in view.

During the decade from 1820 to 1830 the Catholic laity was increased from two sources. Many of the younger generation, either from indifference or overborne by surrounding Protestant influences had been in danger of slipping away from the fold. These were reclaimed by the more aggressive, new administration. There was, in addition, a continuous stream of immigration from Catholic Ireland. The need for English speaking priests could only be supplied by recruits

* Bishop Dubourg to Bishop Plessis, New Orleans, 19 March 1822, (From the Quebec Archives).
Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1908), Records, XIX, p. 196

from that country, and the success of Catholic emancipation gave new courage and enthusiasm to the Irish clergy laboring in missionary fields. Hence it came about, that by the year 1829, the predominating influence in the Catholic Church in the United States was beginning to shift from the French to the Irish.

The beginnings of a Catholic Press give further evidence of the increasing vitality of the Church. Three regular Catholic periodicals similar to those published by the various Protestant sects were already in circulation before 1829. The United States Catholic Miscellany was founded in Charleston by Bishop England, the Truth Teller was published in New York, and the Jesuit in Boston.*

The financial resources of the bishops were wholly inadequate for the increasing needs of the church in a rapidly growing country. An insubordinate laity kept control of the revenues and dealt out pitifully meagre sums to the clergy in charge. Few American Catholics were in affluent circumstances.

* Middleton, Rev. T. C., Catholic Periodicals published in the United States.
Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1908), Records XIX, p. 20

There was lack of priests, of churches, of vestments, and, above all, the ever pressing lack of money. Under these conditions the bishops must, perforce, look outside the country for missionary aid. For the purpose of raising funds for the church in America they made frequent visits to Rome, and to the Catholic countries of Europe. Before 1820, there was one organization to which they could appeal; in 1830 there were three different sources from which contributions could be secured.

The Sacred Congregation of Propaganda (de Propaganda Fide) is that "department of the pontifical administration charged with the spread of Catholicism and with the regulation of ecclesiastical administration in non-Catholic countries."* It was founded by Gregory XV as a permanent department of the Vatican in the early seventeenth century. Part of its revenues were assigned to the Collegium Urbanum, the Seminary of the Propaganda, where priests destined for service in missionary fields could receive suitable education. From letters such as that of Bishop Dubourg above

* Catholic Encyclopedia, XI, p. 456. Propaganda

quoted, and others in the archives of the Irish College in Rome, it appears that there was much dissatisfaction with the administration of Propaganda about 1820. This criticism may have been due, in part, to the fact that demands upon the Vatican greatly exceeded the resources at its command. The Pope from his private revenues frequently supplemented contributions to especially needy bishops.

At the instance of Bishop Dubourg a new missionary society was founded with headquarters in France. Father Inglesi, Vicar-General of New Orleans, was sent to Europe by Bishop Dubourg for that purpose. On May 3, 1822, he called a meeting at Lyons which was attended by twelve ecclesiastics and laymen. Here was established the Society for the Propagation of the Faith which within a generation had become "the largest missionary society in the world."* The year after its foundation it was approved by Pope Pius VII, and, in 1840, Gregory XVI placed it in the rank of the higher Catholic Societies. It is "an international association for the assistance by prayers and alms of Catholic

* Fulton, J. D., *The Roman Catholic Element in American History*, p. 198.

Missionary priests, brothers, and nuns engaged in preaching the Gospel in heathen and non-Catholic countries."*

The organization of the society is exceedingly simple. Alms are collected by small groups, generally of ten, and turned over to a local director through whom they are forwarded to the central administration. There is no permanent fund, and the total amount collected is distributed each year. The fund raised in 1822 was divided into three parts; one was sent to the East, the other two were given to the French bishops of Louisiana and Kentucky. This society has never undertaken to select or to train missionaries. Its activities are confined to the collection of funds and their distribution among those missionaries already in the field. One of its rules is that all affairs shall be made public. Full accounts of the sum collected, its distribution, and reports of missionaries by whom it is expended are regularly published in the Annals of the Society. These Annals furnish valuable data concerning the progress of the Catholic

* Cath. Ency. XII, p. 461. Propagation of the Faith

Church in the United States during the early nineteenth century. In the year 1840, a branch of the Society was established in this country. This fact would indicate that, after that date, the United States was no longer regarded exclusively as a missionary field.

In response to an appeal setting forth the needs of German Catholics in America, a new missionary society was established in Vienna in 1829. The object, organization, and methods of this society are clearly set forth in the constitution of the society. The title reads: "Rules of the Institution erected under the name of the Leopold Foundation for aiding Catholic missions in America by Contributions in the Austrian Empire."* The more important rules are given below:

"Rule I. The objects of the institution --- are to promote the greater activity of Catholic Missions in America; to edify Christians by enlisting them in the work of propagating the Church of Jesus Christ in the remote parts of the earth; to preserve in lasting

* The Leopoldine Foundation, Rules of the Institution, etc. Am. Cath. Hist. Researches, (1905), XXII, p. 314

remembrance her deceased Majesty Leopoldina, Empress of Brazil, born Archduchess of Austria."

"Rule II. The means selected to attain these ends are prayers and alms."

The collection of alms was under the supervision of the priests and bishops of the Austrian Empire, all sums being from time to time forwarded to the central direction at Vienna. The method of distribution is prescribed in the rules.

"Rule VIII. The central direction at Vienna undertakes the grateful office of carrying into effect the pious work, under the protection of his most sacred majesty, and in connection with Frederick Rêse, now Vicar-General of the Cincinnati bishopric in North America, and of employing the funds in the most efficacious manner to promote the glory of God and true faith in Jesus Christ; so that the alms --- shall be conscientiously applied and in the most economical manner, to the urgent wants of American missions as they are made known by authentic accounts and careful investigation."

From its inception the Leopold Foundation received the cordial approbation of the Vatican. A

"large indulgence" granted to its members by Pope Leo XII seemed to increase its revenues and to strengthen its efficiency.

Three European organizations, Propaganda, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and the Leopold Foundation were, thus, at work by 1830 in the interests of the Catholic church in America. Year after year, enormous sums of money, trained seminary priests, and members of religious orders were placed at the command of the bishops. Freed by these means from the indignity of lay domination, the bishops were able to reverse the situation, and gradually to assume control of their several dioceses.

The year 1829 marks a distinct epoch in the development of Roman Catholic influence in the United States. Catholic Emancipation in Ireland, the foundation of the Leopold Society in Austria, and the accession of a new pope coincide in date with the First Provincial Council of Baltimore. The advisability of holding such a council had been under discussion since 1813. Upon the advice of Bishop England, the idea was, from time to time, brought to the attention of the Vatican. Pope Pius VII, in 1823, addressed a brief to

the Archbishop of Baltimore on the subject, and, in 1828, Pope Leo XII authorized the convocation of the Council.* The Fathers of "this first important council in the United States" were the Archbishop of Baltimore, the Bishops of Boston, Charleston, Bardstown, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, and the Vicar-General of Philadelphia in whom the active administration of that diocese was vested. The Bishops of New York and Mobile were absent from the country at the time. Each bishop present was accompanied by his theologian. The Superior of the Society of Jesus in the United States, and some of the Sulpicians were also in attendance.** The unique feature of this council was the presence of laymen at one of its sessions. Three eminent lawyers, Roger B. Taney, John Scott, and William G. Read, were invited to attend in order that they might be "consulted as to the best mode of securing and regulating church property."***

The rules of the Council were drawn up at a

* Shea, op. cit., III, p. 408, note, Pius VII, "Non sine magno," Aug. 3, 1823

** Ibid, III, p. 409

*** Bishop England to Judge Gaston, Baltimore, November 7, 1829, Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1908), Records XIX, p. 141

preliminary meeting. The first of these was a precautionary measure providing that only such regulations as could be easily enforced should be adopted. This provision accounts for the moderation of the decree dealing with the trustee system. In every instance, it had been demonstrated that the legal advantage lay with the trustees; hence, the Fathers, while condemning the system as opposed to canon law and the discipline of the church, refrained from enunciating an authoritative edict upon the subject. "Bishops were advised frequently to set before those who administered the temporalities the rules laid down by the Council of Trent." Six of the thirty-eight decrees define the relations between priests and bishops. The others are concerned chiefly with ritual, vestments, administration of the sacraments, and behavior of priests. The erection of Catholic schools, and the preparation of Catholic school books are urged. Proper editions of catechism and prayer-book, and the use of the Douay Bible, are recommended.*

* Shea, op. cit., III, p. 415

The tentative nature of the more important decrees of the First Council of Baltimore indicates that the Catholic Church in the United States was as yet in a formative stage. In the minds of a few leaders, a definite policy had already been formulated. Many serious obstacles were to be overcome before it could be carried into effect. The first necessity was to secure a measure of solidarity within the church. By courtesy of the Archbishop of Baltimore, bishops from outside the Province had taken part in the Council. Its decrees, while representing the opinions of a majority of bishops, can not, however, be taken as the unanimous expression of the Catholic clergy in the United States. Jealousies between bishops survived, and insubordinate priests were to be found in every diocese. The behavior of the inferior clergy was another serious hindrance to the growth of the church. Unruly priests were a double menace. They added, on the one hand, to the difficulties of bishops in dealing with lay trustees, and, on the other, they at times gave warrant for the accusations made by watchful Protestants. Where each sect is exposed to constant criticism from those of an

opposite faith the behavior of the clergy must be impeccable, else one individual may bring disgrace upon the institution. A third necessity was the adjustment of church practices to accord with two different legal principles. Canon law, as recognized by the Council of Trent, was based upon the principle of authority; the law of the country, upon control by the people. Canon law must be obeyed, and the laws of the country could not be violated. The complexity of State and Federal legal systems added to the difficulties of this problem. Could the church be made to conform to canon law, and at the same time be in accord with the legal system of the Federal Government, and with the constitutional provisions of the several states? Or, must the needs of the laws of the country be modified to suit the needs of the church? This problem was the crux of the situation. Upon its solution, the success of the Catholic Church in the United States was, in the last analysis, dependent.

The ratification of the decrees of the First Provincial Council of Baltimore by the Holy See gave to the hierarchy in the United States a definite program. Nominally the Archbishop of Baltimore remained as he had always been the chief prelate of the country; in point of fact Bishop England's influence dominated. "There was no portion of the American Church where his influence was not felt." A visit to Bardstown, New Orleans, and Cincinnati in 1830 put him in touch with several of the newly consecrated bishops, and by means of the "Catholic Miscellany" his opinions on matters of church policy were made familiar to the clergy in all sections of the country.* His aid was solicited in settling controversies between clergy and trustees. He was consulted by bishops, by priests, and by laymen. He maintained most friendly relations with lawyers, politicians, government officials, social leaders and Protestant ministers.**

* R. H. Clarke, *Lives of the Deceased Bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States*, (New York, 1888), I, p. 293 ff.

** Bishop England to Judge Gaston, Charleston, Dec. 17, 1831, in *Am. Cath. Hist. Soc.* (1908), Records, XIX, p. 150.

Nor was his influence in Rome less potent. His loyalty to the Holy See was unquestioned, and in the Constitutions drawn up for churches in his own diocese he had early shown a keen appreciation of the peculiar American conditions which necessitated a modification of papal policy. For these reasons his advice was solicited by Propaganda upon questions of policy regarding the Church in America. By means of frequent visits to Rome and uninterrupted correspondence with the Rector of the Irish College he kept in close touch with Vatican politics, and was able to awaken Propaganda and Pope to the opportunities which America afforded for the advancement of the Catholic religion.

Chief among the characteristics of the people of the United States, Bishop England notes a reverence for written law, and deep antagonism to "all authority not made manifest by law." He was also conscious of the strong national pride of Americans, and of the frontiers-man's dislike of the foreign aristocrat. He, therefore, advised that papal authority should be exercised through Councils, that lawyers should be consulted on all questions concerning church property, that bishops and priests should be urged to adopt

American customs, and that, whenever possible, they should become American citizens. This policy as presented to the papacy is outlined in the document given below. The translation here cited was made by the archivist of the American Catholic Historical Society from an Italian copy in the archives of the Irish College in Rome. The original document is unsigned and bears no date. From internal evidence and from the fact that it is filed with Bishop England's papers the authorship may safely be ascribed to him. From the same evidences the document may be dated about the year 1833 when other reports regarding the Church in America were presented to Propaganda both in writing and in person by Bishop England.

"Report on the state of the Church in the
United States.*

"The Catholic Church of the United States has made very great progress, but if its administration were carried on differently its rapid advancement

* Report on the State of the Church in the United States, (From the Archives of the Irish College in Rome), in Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1897), Records, VIII, p. 459

would surpass the bounds of credibility.

"The principal ~~imp~~ediments to this advancement arose from the following causes:

"I. The want of a sufficient number of priests.

"II. The bad conduct of several priests who went thither from Europe, not through motives of zeal but because they could not get along at home. The great needs of the American Missions constrained the Bishops to employ them in the hope that they might become useful.

"III. The ignorance on the part of many of the clergy of the language and laws of the country; as also the suspicion on the part of the people that such clergymen were more favorably disposed towards the institutions of Europe than towards those of the American Republics.

"IV. The want of sufficient and practical knowledge on the part of others of the clergy.

"V. The unfortunate efforts made by others to give to the Catholic Church in the United States a too close affinity with certain particular establishments in Europe. There is no jealousy of a close connection with Rome, for every American knows that such a union

is essential to the Catholic religion; but it is different in regard to other places and nations, for it is feared lest these may have some right of supervision or administration.

"VI. The absolute want of any sort of co-operation or of a common *modus agendi* among the Bishops, who for the most part held themselves apart and aloof one from another. Although each one did what he could, nevertheless schisms and other evils broke out; and these might easily have been repressed by the acts of a Council confirmed by the Holy See. There is great reason to believe that the schism, which for so long a time afflicted Philadelphia, would still be rampant, if the Synod of 1829 had not, by its reports to Rome, placed the Holy See in a position to know more fully how to apply an opportune remedy.

"VII. Although the Archbishops of Baltimore have all been excellent men, nevertheless the opinion has been quite general that the successors of Bishop Carroll have not been the best fitted for that position or dignity. Many other nominations to Bishoprics were not well received, and they did not turn out well. Some plan should be adopted to enable the Holy See to

procure information on this important point. Although the priests have not yet spoken openly on this matter, nevertheless it would be leading the Holy See into error to say that either the clergy or the great body of the laity is content with nominations procured privately.

"VIII. In the United States the appointment of persons fitted for ecclesiastical dignities is of more importance than in any part of Europe; since heretofore each Bishop had practically greater power in his own diocese than the Pope had in the Universal Church. For he had all the ordinary, and almost all the extraordinary, faculties without any Congregation or Council, or established discipline, to limit their exercise. Moreover, alone and without extraneous support he had in most cases to encounter the difficulties of his position, amongst the adversaries of every kind; and great numbers of the clergy had the same power and the same difficulties.

"IX. The American people are, generally speaking, extremely intelligent, strict and close observers of public affairs, much given to study, very well educated, accustomed to respect personal merit rather than rank

or office. Hence to send amongst them and to place in high positions persons whose qualifications are questionable, would result in destroying the utility and the influence of the positions they would be appointed to fill.

" X. The people of the United States are wonderfully attached to their form of government; but they are very sparing and reserved of their praise of others. Many of the clergy who went thither from the continent of Europe not only have not wished to be subject to the United States and to be enrolled as citizens, but they did not hesitate to openly avow their predilection for the governments of Europe. Thus they have not only lost the confidence of the people, but on many occasions they created great prejudice against the Catholic Religion by furnishing grounds for the opinion that it was incompatible with the government of the United States.

" XI. Many priests complain that while the hierarchy is fully established in regard to Bishops, nothing has yet been done in regard to priests. They have only delegated jurisdiction which can be taken from them at the pleasure of the Bishops, and has

frequently been so taken, without any chance for appeal, since no censure was inflicted. This power, up to a certain point, is absolutely required, as all confess; but many are of opinion that it would be well to form some parishes, and thus give the American Church a more perfect form, and to the older and more experienced among the clergy a more respectable standing.

"XII. The people of the United States are accustomed to have all their affairs transacted in accordance with fixed laws, and not according to the dictates of the will of an individual. They observe that nothing is done by the Holy See without previous consultation and deliberation. They know that in the Catholic Church the power of legislation resides in the Pope and the Bishops; and they would be greatly impressed if they would see the Church in America regulated in accordance with laws emanating from a Council of Bishops with the approbation of the Holy Father. The conformity of this mode of procedure with their own principles and practice is so striking, that it would easily gain not only their obedience but also their attachment. But they will never be reconciled

to the practice of the Bishop, and sometimes of the priest alone, giving orders without assigning any reasons for the same.

"XIII. The want of a distinct and definite line of limitation between the rights of the clergy and those of the laity regarding the administration of Church property has occasioned most of the schisms and other evils that have desolated this Church.

"The following remedies are suggested.

"I. That the Holy See bind the American Church to itself with the closest possible union.

"II. That this be effected by encouraging the frequent convocation of Councils, whose acts and decrees must in every instance, be submitted to the approbation of the Holy See before promulgation.

"III. That no affair of general importance to the American Church be undertaken unless after deliberation in Council.

"IV. That some system be established for recommending to the Holy See the names of priests qualified for promotion to the Episcopacy.

"V. That the Holy See impress upon the consideration of the Bishops the propriety of establishing some

regular manner of perfecting local divisions, and of appointing some rectors of parishes or other districts with ordinary jurisdiction.

"VI. That the Holy See impress upon them also the necessity of establishing some canonical and legal system of discipline, as far as circumstances will permit.

"It is a matter of great importance to prevent the breaking out of evils by means of opportune legislation, rather than to wait until they break out before adopting appropriate remedies. The latter must always happen if the present want of system be allowed to continue.

" Another benefit will be that if evils should arise or disputes occur, the Holy See can easily and opportunely be placed in possession of the facts by a Council which could examine these facts on the spot; whereas under present circumstances it would remain in such contingencies more or less subject to errors arising from partial expositions.

"It is always to be desired that the Holy See be placed beyond the necessity of doing anything displeasing, and that it be presented to foreign countries in

an aspect that will be both attractive and imposing. Through the practice above recommended, the unpleasant duty devolves on the Council; and each prelate sustains the authority of the Holy See, so that while the decision of the latter is being carried into effect it is loved, feared, and respected."

At a period when Protestant churches were still oblivious to the opportunities for missionary enterprise afforded by the rapid settlement of the Ohio Valley and the Middle West, the Catholic Church was equipped with the three essentials for a successful campaign; a thoroughly efficient organization, a definitely outlined program, and the assurance of financial support. Protestant lack of missionary zeal can not be entirely ascribed to indifference. To the Protestant mind, religion was a matter of the individual conscience, and a religious congregation was a voluntary organization. Methodism, it is true, was making great advances in the West and South. But Methodism relied upon the doctrine of individual conversion; it laid little stress upon church organization and almost none upon early training. The Catholic principle, on the contrary, recognized the responsibility of the clergy, the necessity for the sacraments of the Church, and, above all, the authority of the Church over individuals within its fold. Logically, the Church must seek out those who have strayed, must guard its members from contamination, and, for the good of the Church as well as for

the salvation of their own souls, must coerce the indifferent and the unruly. The authority of the clergy must be upheld, children must be given a Catholic education, the sacraments of the church must be administered. The efforts of the Church to seek out those Catholics who "had been deprived of the consolations of their religion," to organize them into congregations, to build churches, and to establish schools, were productive of immediate and astonishing results during the period between 1820 and 1840.

Economic conditions in the United States favored the Catholic advance. Although no appreciable number of Catholics came to this country primarily for religious reasons, a large proportion of the immigrants between 1820 and 1840 were of that religion. The chief inducements were cheap lands in the west, and the demand for labor in roads, canals, and in the manufacturing industries of the east. Political unrest in Europe also stimulated this movement. Reactionary European governments had barely survived the shocks of revolution, and repressive measures forced many of the discontented to emigrate. In the main Americans were hospitable to the new comers.

American optimism prevailed on the frontier. Individual opportunity was unlimited. There was land and labor in abundance. Material prosperity, political independence, and religious toleration, America freely offered to all. It was the fault of the individual if he were unable to use these blessings to his own advantage. Exact data are not available for reliable estimates regarding the religious sects in the United States in 1830. The census officer made no inquiries into religious beliefs and each sect had its own method of calculating memberships. Some denominations counted only communicants as church members, others included all who had been baptized. The Catholic almanacs acknowledge the impossibility of giving exact figures and base their estimates upon increase of population, counting as members of the church all children born of Catholic parents whether or not they had been brought to the priest to be baptized.

In 1829 the Catholics in the United States were estimated by the Council of Baltimore at about half a million in a population of twelve millions.*

* Shea, op. cit., III, 419

Most of them were poor, and they were widely scattered throughout the country. The succeeding ten years brought more than half a million immigrants to this country. Of these, more than 120,000 came from Germany, and nearly twice as many either direct from Ireland or from Great Britain and Ireland.* The Irish congregated chiefly in the manufacturing centers of New York, New England, and Philadelphia, or moved slowly west by way of construction camps along roads and canals. It was not until 1835 that the first Irish Catholic parish in the West was established at Detroit.** The Irish were intensely loyal to their national religion, and in their own country had been accustomed to clerical domination. They came to America without a proportionate supply of priests. The immediate effect of "a full dinner-pail" in combination with an unwonted sense of personal, religious, and political independence was to develop a spirit of insubordination of which the

* W. J. Bromwell, *History of Immigration to the United States*, (New York, 1855), p. 16

** Rev. Thomas Cullen, *Pioneer Irish Catholic Priest of the Diocese of Detroit, 1833-1862*, in *Am. Cath. Hist. Researches*, (1896), XIII, p. 178

trustee conflicts were but one manifestation. Irish priests and bishops were needed to cope with such problems. Aided by the great missionary societies they came in ever increasing numbers, and step by step the clergy gained control of the Irish element within the Church. It has been estimated that of the Germans who came to the United States before 1850 only about one-half were Protestant.* "The German element within the Roman Church holds in some respects so distinct a position that its history must be thoroughly understood by the student who would analyze the influence of that powerful ecclesiastical organization upon American life."** German villagers accustomed to agricultural life were apt to avoid cities, and many of them went directly west where they settled upon little farms of their own. Others found employment in useful trades in the larger cities. German Catholics were to be found in all sections. In 1823 the Bishop of Cincinnati reported Catholics in every county of Ohio, and

* H. De Courcy, *The Catholic Church in the United States*, (New York, 1857), p. 533

** E. Bruncken, *Germans in America*, Am. Hist. Association Annual Report 1898, pp. 345-353

met many Germans and Swiss.* The Bishop of St. Louis writes in 1832, "I am glad to hear of the increase of the Sunobush settlement. --- These good Germans are very industrious and useful citizens and excellent Catholics. --- A good number of them are come to St. Louis. --- Others have been to look at the country toward St. Charles, others towards Belleville where there is public land."** In 1836 separate German congregations were established in Boston, and in New York. Bishop Kenrick in 1838 reports to Rome, "There is a very large number of German Catholics in the Diocese of Philadelphia. The great majority are born of German parentage in America; but there are also very many who have emigrated into the United States direct from Europe."*** In Cincinnati there was enough German Catholic influence to warrant the establishment in 1839 of the "Wahrheitsfreund," the first German

* Clarke, op. cit., I, p. 338

** Bishop Rosati to Bishop Timon, St. Louis, 14th of March, 1832. (From the Catholic American Archives Dept. Notre Dame, Ind.) in Am. Cath. Hist. Researches, (1897), XIV, p. 143.

*** Report of the Situation and Condition of the Diocese of Philadelphia, given by the Rev. Peter R. Kenrick, Vicar-General of the same Diocese, from Rome, November 21, 1838, in Am. Cath. Hist. Researches, (1905), XXII, p. 144

Catholic newspaper published in the United States.* From these indications it is clear that before 1840 the Germans formed an element to be reckoned with in determining a Catholic policy.

The addition of this German element did not proportionately strengthen the Church in the United States. German congregations, while willing enough to support priests of their own choosing, refused to co-operate with priests appointed by an Irish bishop. Racial antipathy of Celt and Teuton accounts in part for this insubordination. Other influences must also be taken into consideration. The Germans were less accustomed than the Irish to submit to clerical control, and those born in this country of German parentage were disposed to resent any interference with liberties they enjoyed as free American citizens. Moreover, in their own country German Catholics had accepted as of right the special privileges conceded by the papacy to German ecclesiastics. Echoes of the old struggle

* German Catholic American Notes. Extracts from the Cincinnati "Wahrheits freund," the first German Catholic newspaper published in the United States, in Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1909) Records, XX, p. 89

between Church and State were still disturbing the relations between the Catholic States of Germany and the Holy See, and Germans coming to this country were disinclined to accept a domination more exacting than that to which they had been accustomed in their European homes. The steady increase of immigration added to the difficulties of the problem. Long years of struggle were to ensue before the Germans could be assimilated and brought into harmonious relations with the other component elements of the Catholic Church in America.

The methods adopted by the Bishops in dealing with the Germans were those already found effective in their conflicts with trustees. There was imperative need for German priests who could hear confessions and preach in their own language. The Bishop of Philadelphia "used all possible efforts to satisfy the spiritual wants of the Germans. Priests who came from Germany with the necessary recommendations received appointments."* Where no German priests were

* Report by Rev. P. A. Kenrick, op. cit. Researches, XXII, p. 144

available the Bishop, in order to restore harmony and to maintain a semblance of episcopal authority, sometimes resorted to the expedient of becoming himself chaplain of a German congregation. Aid was generously given by the Leopold Society to all Bishops having Germans in their charge. Missions and schools received financial assistance, and every effort was made by the Society to induce Austrian and German priests to volunteer for service in America. Not all of those who came were able to adjust themselves to American conditions. Misunderstandings arose between foreign priests and their ecclesiastical superiors, the priests in most instances retaining the support of their congregations. The work of the Leopold Society went steadily on, and by 1842 its influence was so extensive that a special commissioner was sent to the United States to study the actual condition of the German Catholics.* Reports sent by American missionaries and Bishops to the central administration in Vienna furnish valuable material for a study of the history of the Catholic Church in America.

* Shea, op. cit., III, 456

The Catholic periodical press furnished another proof of the rapidly increasing influence of that religion. From the list given below it may be seen that nearly a dozen new publications were added to the original three between the First and the Fourth Councils of Baltimore.*

1825	The Truth Teller	New York	(weekly)
1829	The Irishman & Charleston Weekly Register,	Charleston, S. C.	
1829	The Catholic Press	Hartford, Conn.	(weekly)
1829	The Irish Shield & Monthly Milesian	New York	
1829	The Jesuit, or Catholic Sentinel	Boston	(weekly)
1829	The Epostulator, or Young Catholic's Guide	Boston	
1830	Metropolitan, or Catholic Monthly Magazine	Baltimore	
	The Catholic Telegraph	Cincinnati	(Weekly)
1832	The Shepherd of the Valley	St. Louis	(weekly)
1833	The Catholic Herald	Philadelphia	(weekly)
1835	The Green Banner	New York	(weekly)
1836	The Catholic Advocate	Louisville	(weekly)
1840	Freeman's Journal	New York	(weekly)

* Catholic Periodicals published in the United States, in Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1908), XIX, p. 20

The establishment of the Catholic Tract Society of Baltimore in 1838, on the model of the Protestant Bible and Tract Societies already in operation, aided materially in the dissemination of Catholic literature. The "Wahrheits freund" founded in Cincinnati the following year extended the influence of the press to German Catholics.

Some of these publications gained wide circulation; others were discontinued for lack of financial support. Obviously those sustaining the policy of the Bishops had the advantage. The control of the Catholic press gave to the hierarchy a most effective weapon of defense against criticism from within or from without the Church. Like political parties the religious sects in the United States early recognized the value of a reliable party organ. Religious periodicals kept the needs of the churches before the people, they renewed the courage of wavering or indifferent laymen, they could be used for the simultaneous enunciation of a policy in the various sections of the country. Certain among these publications, notably the Freeman's Journal, gave valuable aid to the Catholic cause in moments of political necessity. A distinguished German Protestant

lecturing in Berlin in 1854 said of the Catholic Church in America, "She knows how to use the lever of the public press for her purposes, and endeavors to keep pace with the enormous journalizing zeal of America."* Catholic evidence may also be cited. Bishop England reporting to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda in 1833 wrote as follows: "Now I see that three other Catholic journals of the same form [as the Catholic Miscellany] and various political dailies sustain our doctrines; so that of one thousand journals in the United States, it may be said that ten are Catholic, one hundred anti-Catholic, (of which sixty are furiously inimical), perhaps one hundred favorable to Catholics, three hundred or four hundred unfavorable, and the rest indifferent. But I frankly confess that my receipts from this source do not suffice to meet the necessary outlay; and yet, not only must such journals be maintained, but we must, moreover, seek to avail ourselves in a more extended manner of the periodical press. This is a point that must not be overlooked; and one of the principal aims I have in view is precisely to find the means for

* P. Schaff, *America*, (New York, 1855)

maintaining and extending this instrument, which already commences to furnish us with such power for good."*

From the above quotations we may conclude that the importance of the press was clearly recognized by both Catholics and Protestants, and that the support of influential newspapers was an essential of the aggressive policy adopted by the Catholic leaders.

The remedies suggested by Bishop England for improving the administration of the Church in America were one by one adopted after his return from Rome. By means of Provincial Councils in 1833, in 1837, and in 1840, the Holy See strove "to bind the American Church to itself with the closest possible union," and after each Council decrees were "submitted to the approbation of the Holy See before promulgation."** Archbishop Whitfield was of the opinion that it would be wiser to carry out the decrees of the First Council rather than to multiply enactments. He seems, however,

* Report of Bishop England to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, (From the Archives of the Irish College in Rome), in Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1897), Records, VIII, p. 326

** Report on the State of the Church in the United States, see ante p.

to have yielded to advice from Rome, and the Second Provincial Council was summoned to meet on the 20th day of October, 1833.* Only one bishop who was actually in charge of a diocese failed to attend. Bishop England arrived from Europe in time to be present, and the policy carried out by the Council coincides with the plan outlined by him while in Rome. Besides the Bishops, Provincials of the three great orders, the Society of Jesus, the Dominicans, and the Sulpicians were also in attendance. The decrees of the Second Provincial Council were confirmed by a brief of Gregory XVI and promulgated in 1834. The new See of Vincennes was erected, the limits of all dioceses were fixed, and a committee for drawing up a suitable ritual for American churches was appointed. Propaganda at the same time adopted a new method of procuring nominations of bishops for the vacant sees.**

Four years intervened between the Second and Third Councils.

* Shea, op. cit., III, p. 432

** Ibid, III, p. 433

There are some evidences of discord among the Fathers who assembled in 1837. Bishop Dubois of New York declined the invitation to attend, the Bishop of Philadelphia was again represented by his Administrator, and the Bishop of Detroit, although present in Baltimore, took no part in the sessions. Little was accomplished beyond the adoption of a new ritual and the erection of three new sees.* The Pope refused to grant the request of the Council that Bishop Resé be permitted to resign the See of Detroit. The Bishop was instead called to Rome, where on account of ill health he was detained under surveillance until 1849 when the Pope himself was a refugee at the Court of Naples.**

When the Fourth Provincial Council was called in 1840 the pioneer days of the Catholic Church had passed. Eleven Bishops shared in its deliberations, the Primate of Lorraine was present as a guest, and, for the first time, the Superior of the Redemptorists

* Ibid, III, p. 433

** Ibid, III, p. 445, 636.

J. G. Schwarz to Bishop England, Vienna, October 28th, 1836. (From the archives of the Irish College in Rome), in Am. Cath. Hist. Soc., (1897), Records, VIII, p. 294

sat side by side with the Provincials of the other great orders. Bishop England was prevented by failing health from taking part in this Council. His work, however, had been accomplished. Through his foresight and energy the administration and organization of the Catholic Church had been centralized. The time was near at hand when, under the direction of that organization, Catholics could be induced to act as a unit for the furtherance of measures needful for the continued prosperity of the church. The diplomatic skill of Bishop England had effected solidarity within the Church. Newer times called forth a gifted politician under whose leadership the Catholic party achieved more than one victory in the field of practical politics.

The changing temper of the age may be noted in the decrees of the Fourth Provincial Council. Questions of administration and ceremonial receive proportionately little attention. Official thanks to the Leopold Association, and letters of sympathy to German Archbishops "then suffering for their fidelity to the laws of the Church," suggest a closer touch with European affairs. The new humanitarian and moral

spirit finds expression in a decree advocating temperance, and in others concerning education, the Bible, observance of the Lord's Day, and the behavior of the clergy. Total abstinence is to be encouraged, and the sacraments of the Church may be refused to those who sell liquor on Sunday.* The Council took no official cognizance of the political influence which Catholics in certain localities had already begun to exert. Throughout the controversies of the next twenty years, the Catholic church theoretically adhered to the policy of non-interference in political matters. It was assumed that political activity was exercised by the individual as a citizen, not as a Roman Catholic. This theory of divided loyalty was upheld by the Church. "The Catholic clergy of the United States," says De Tocqueville, "have never attempted to oppose this political tendency, but they seek rather to justify it. The Catholic priests in America have divided the intellectual world into two parts; in the one they place the doctrines of revealed religion which they assent

* Shea, op. cit., III, p. 452

to without discussion; in the other they leave those political truths which they believe the Deity has left open to free inquiry. Thus the Catholics of the United States are at the same time the most submissive believers and the most independent citizens."*

The decrees ignored political problems but the Fathers were in touch with the situation. In their Pastoral letter to Catholics in the United States they "entered upon the great elections where calumny fraud and violence were so freely used, and thus what was meant to be a blessing is turned into a curse." The faithful were entreated to avoid the contaminating influence of political strife, and to "keep aloof from the pestilential atmosphere in which honor, virtue, patriotism and religion perish."**

Within the Church obstacles to progress yet remained. The Bishops still "held themselves apart and aloof one from another." Old jealousies between French and Irish Bishops survived, new jealousies

* Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, (Cambridge, Mass. 1864), I, p. 385

** Shea, *op. cit.*, III, p. 454

between Irish and Germans arose. Each Bishop strove for the support of Propaganda, and sought to propitiate the French and Austrian missionary societies. The needs of the churches grew with the increase of immigration and the westward expansion of the country. The Germans, accustomed to state support, were unwilling to contribute to the needs of churches other than their own. Trustees were still able to defy the ecclesiastical authorities.

In Boston and in Philadelphia the Bishops soothed the feelings of the trustees by taking charge in person of restive congregations. The trustees of St. Peter's in New York voted against their Bishop, those of the cathedral refused to pay his salary.* In Rochester, the preacher who did not please the trustees was driven out. The priest at Vincennes was put in jail for judgment of a debt of fifty dollars against the church, and was only released from confinement when the Sisters went security. He complains

* Ibid, III, p. 518

that "whilst all that went on, none of the trustees, none of the congregation, made a motion towards his release."*

Dissatisfaction with regard to the appointment of Bishops continued. The Holy See was besieged with recommendations setting forth rival claims of French and Irish candidates. Despite the plans for securing nominations devised by Propaganda the preceding year, Bishop England writes from Charleston in 1835: "I am convinced that the old system is at work, and that effectually Doctor Deluol, the Superior of the Sulpicians, is the regulator of the American Church; and I have been severely punished before now for attempting to dissent from their Placets." He objects to each of the three candidates proposed for the vacant see of New Orleans, and since none but a Frenchman is to be considered, he advises the transfer of the Bishop of Mobile to that diocese. He is convinced that Bishop Portier "would do well in New Orleans, and thus Mobile would be left open to an Irish or American

* Father Picot to Rev. Robert Abell, Vincennes, August 18th, 1833, in Am. Cath. Hist. Researches, (1898), XV, p. 16

prelate who would follow a different system."*

The trend of events was in favor of the Irish. From the appended list of American prelates it may be seen that while the French, in 1840, ministered to the scattered population of the Mississippi Valley, Irish bishops, or Americans who acted with them, were in charge of the populous cities of the Atlantic seaboard and of the chief city of the Ohio Valley. Although the German population was steadily increasing, the only German bishop yet appointed to the United States had been suspended from the exercise of his episcopal faculties, and was replaced in 1841 by a Belgian trained in France. The admission of the Redemptorist Superior to the Council of 1840 is the first recognition of the growing importance of the German element within the American Church.

* Bishop England to Dr. M. O'Connor, Charleston, (S.C.) February 25, 1825. (From archives of the Irish College in Rome), in Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1897), Records, VIII, p. 200.

Roman Catholic Bishops in the United States - 1840*

See of Baltimore	Bishop Eccleston	American
Boston	Bishop Fenwick	American
New York	Coadjutor Bishop Hughes	Irish
Philadelphia	Coadjutor Bishop Kenrick	Irish
Richmond	Bishop Whelan (1841)	American
Charleston	Bishop England	Irish
Cincinnati	Bishop Purcell	Irish
Bardstown	Bishops Flaget and Chabrat	French
Vincennes	Bishop de la Hailandière	French
New Orleans	Bishop Blanc	French
Mobile	Bishop Portier	French
Dubuque	Bishop Loras	French
St. Louis	Bishop Rosati	Italian
Nashville	Bishop Miles	American
Natchez	Bishop Clauche	American
Detroit	Bishop Rêse (suspended)	German

* List compiled from Shea, Op. cit., and Clarke, op. cit.

An excellent summary of the results achieved before 1838 by the Catholic Church is to be found in the Report on Missions of the United States published in the Annals of Propagation of Faith of that year. Successes and failures are balanced against each other. Hindrances to progress are recognized and measures to overcome them are recommended. The attention of European Catholics is called to the imperative needs of the American Church. A few extracts from this report will serve to show how heavily the balance weighed on the side of progress.

"It is unfortunately true that the Church of the United States has the most extensive losses to deplore. We need not here repeat the calculations which place this melancholy fact beyond the possibility of a doubt; they are to be found in the letter of Doctor England, already published in the Annals; and were we even to suppose that the learned Prelate had pushed his calculations a little too far, it would still be true to say that the great numerical inferiority of the American Catholics is owing to the many defections which have taken place within the last forty years.

"'Defections, properly so called' says the coadjutor Bishop of Philadelphia, 'are exceedingly rare; but the number of those who abandon the Faith of their parents is very considerable.' - - - 'The spirit of independence,' adds his lordship, 'here felt by all fills them with a proud confidence in their own judgments and with a jealous distrust against the exercise of every species of authority. Even the children, when receiving catechistical instructions, shew not the docility which might be expected from their age. The adults are willing enough to assist at sermons, but more, it is to be feared with a view of criticising than of profiting by the instruction. The most violent prejudices militate against the Catholic Religion, and in places where Catholics are not rendered respectable by numbers and by wealth, men are almost ashamed to profess it. The want of opportunity brings on a want of desire to approach the sacraments; religious exercises are neglected and forgotten; and though the majority profess at least an external respect for some sect or other, there are many who have no creed at all.'

"Should this state of things make us despair of the future? In our opinion, decidedly not;-but it should excite us to inquire into the cause and to seek for the cure of so serious an evil. Now, the cause is too evident to be mistaken: it is found in the absence of a body of Clergymen, sufficiently numerous to save the emigrants from spiritual ruin and their descendants from apostacy, and sufficiently enlightened to destroy those deep-rooted prejudices which oppose an insurmountable barrier to the progress of our holy Religion.

"Though the Clergymen of the present day are not sufficiently numerous to meet all calls, yet a check has been put to the defections of past times, and for the few apostates whose loss she has still to deplore, the Church is more than consoled by the numbers who annually return to the unity of the Faith.

"The present is not therefore the moment to be discouraged, when we may look upon the following facts and inferences as certain:- with comparatively small means the descendants of Catholic emigrants have been saved from apostacy; with a few more Priests thousands of others would have been kept in the profession and

practice of the true Faith; with more Priests the ⁷⁶
Catholic Religion can be firmly established in America;
and if the increase in their number be in proportion
to existing wants, there would be a fair chance at the
present day of bringing back some of those that have
strayed away, and of perhaps doubling in a short time,
the actual number of American Catholics. We say "at
the present day;" for later it unquestionably will be
more difficult and it may be impossible.

"We have therefore no hesitation in saying that
until America can supply native Priests she will
necessarily stand in need of our assistance. -----
Few young men in America show any signs of vocation
to the priesthood; or, if they do, the means of enabling
them to persevere in their pious intentions remains
yet to be supplied.

"Preparatory ecclesiastical schools are there-
fore indispensably necessary, and ecclesiastical col-
leges are equally required. The name of college we
can scarcely give to the establishments got up by
different Bishops; or, at all events by whatever name
we designate them, the improvements and additions still
wanted require assistance; and in this sense we may

truly say that the future prospects of the American Church depend upon the prayers and support of the Catholics of Europe.

"If we are now asked: "If the Catholic Religion progressing in America?" we unhesitatingly answer: "Yes." We do not however estimate this progress by the number of Catholics who have within the last forty years emigrated thither; we estimate it by the thousands that have been preserved from error and heresy; we estimate it by the churches that have been built, by the colleges and other religious establishments that have been got up; we estimate it by the successful issue of those efforts that have saved the country from becoming entirely Protestant. We at the same time admit that the present is a most critical moment for the best interests of our trans-Atlantic brethren, and that now must be decided the momentous question; whether truth or falsehood is to claim the most important position in the new world & direct the population which the distractions and revolutions of Europe are every day throwing upon its shores."*

* The Missions of the United States in 1838, (From Annals of Propagation of Faith, Sept., 1838), in Am. Cath. Hist. Researches (1891), VIII, pp.161-167

The marked increase in the number of Catholics in the United States during the period between 1820 and 1840 was accompanied by a gradual shifting of public opinion. The change of feeling was especially noticeable in those seaboard cities where the increase was most rapid, and where quarrels between trustees and bishops had called the attention of the Protestant majority to the presence of a Catholic element in the population. So long as the Catholics remained an insignificant minority, there was practically no opposition to them; but, as they became numerically and politically important, feelings of suspicion and hostility were manifest.* Few indications of Protestant hostility are to be noted prior to 1830. The elevation of Bishop Cheverus, formerly of Boston, to the cardinalate called forth expressions of good will from the secular press in New England.** The Catholic Emancipation Bill was hailed as a triumph of the principle of religious toleration, a principle for which American citizens felt an almost proprietary

* C. G. Herbermann: The Rt. Rev. John Dubois, D.D., Third Bishop of New York, in U. S. Cath. Hist. Soc. (New York, 1899), Hist. Records and Studies I, p. 325

** Niles' Register, Nov. 1, 1828, XXXV, p. 149

responsibility. The bells of Christ Church, and of the State House in Philadelphia were rung by order of the Mayor, "in testimony of joy at the recent triumph of religious liberty in England."*

A distinct change of temper became apparent shortly after 1830. The Fathers of the Second Council of Baltimore in 1833 were conscious of the growing antagonism of the press. In their pastoral letter to the faithful they wrote: "We notice with regret, a spirit exhibited by some of the conductors of the press engaged in the interests of those brethren separated from our communion, which has within a few years become more unkind and unjust in our regard. Not only do they assail us and our institutions in a style of vituperation and offense, misrepresent our tenets, vilify our practices, repeat the hundred times refuted calumnies of days of angry and bitter contention in other lands, but they have even denounced you and us as enemies to the liberties of the republic, and have openly proclaimed the fancied necessity of not only obstructing our progress, but of using their

* Ibid, May 23, 1829, XXXVI, p. 200

best efforts to extirpate our religion.**

Year by year this feeling of antagonism grew stronger. An English traveller in the United States in 1835 speaks of the "great alarm felt in the country" on account of the influence and spread of Romanism.** De Tocqueville has much to say in like strain. The anti-Catholic secular press, and Protestant periodicals repeated the same charges again and again. Wild tales of the horrors of convent life were told and believed. The publication by a New York firm of Maria Monk's book purporting to reveal conditions in the Hotel Dieu at Montreal created intense indignation and excitement. The investigations of a rival editor, William L. Stone, of the Commercial Advertiser, himself a Protestant, proved the book to be a fraud. Notwithstanding this exposure, it was widely read, and many years later was quoted as conclusive evidence of existing practices in Catholic institutions.

* Shea, op. cit., III, p. 432

** "Romanism in this Country" as seen by a Deputation of Congregationalists from England in 1835, in Am. Cath. Hist. Res. (1911), XXVIII, p. 235

Two outbreaks of mob violence can be traced directly to popular credence in these tales of convent life. In either instance the immediate provocation was an unfortunate occurrence liable to misconstruction by an excited and suspicious community. One of these attacks resulted in the destruction of Catholic property. At the Ursuline convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts, in 1834, a nun ill from overwork became delirious, escaped from the convent, and sought refuge with the family of a pupil. Next day she was persuaded by the bishop to return to her convent.* The feeling aroused by this incident extended to all classes. Lyman Beecher preached against the Catholics, public meetings were held, and a disorderly mob set fire to the convent. Excitement prevailed for a week. Irish laborers on the railroads flocked into Boston to avenge the insult to their religion. The militia was called out, and the bishop lent his efforts to restore order. Every effort was made to soothe the feelings of the Catholics. A

* Letters relating to the destruction of the Ursuline Convent, Charlestown, Mass. in U.S. Cath. Hist. Magazine, (1890), III, p. 274

Faneuil Hall meeting of representative citizens passed the usual resolutions, and appointed a committee of investigation. The governor offered a reward for the detection of the mob leaders. An effort was made to secure compensation from the state for the property destroyed.* During the excited years of the knowing movement, one of the chief grievances of the Catholic party was the failure of the Legislature of Massachusetts to pass a measure to that effect.

A similar incident occurred in Baltimore in 1839. A nun "subject to fits of melancholy," jumped through a window, and fled to a neighboring house. The owner informed the mayor who at once ordered a thorough medical investigation. The courage of a few citizens and the prompt action of the authorities prevented a repetition of the excesses in Massachusetts.* Order was restored within a week. In both of these cases the results of investigation were favorable to the Catholics. The prevalent suspicion was, however, not allayed, and Protestant hatred of monastic life was strengthened by these events.

* Shea, op. cit., III. 479

** Ibid, III, 448

The feeling aroused among Catholics at the time is expressed in a confidential letter of Bishop England to Rome. He writes: "We are waging a serious war here and one which I think has been very injudiciously conducted in some quarters; and where a want of prudence and an ill regulated zeal, (or I would rather say party spirit,) has produced our most disastrous mishap. To the South we have kept in check the fiends who desired to co-operate with those of the North; but it requires great management, and as yet we have the popular feeling against them.

"I would advise that in favors or facilities in Rome, as far as possible a distinction should be drawn between the persons from the Northern States and those from the South, and that in the Diario and other papers this distinction should be dwelt upon:- giving a preference for liberality, kind feeling and honorable conduct to the Americans of the Southern States, and giving the full benefit of the terms - bigotry and intolerance - to the New England States: viz. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Vermont. They will feel this most sorely and it will be here of the greatest use.

The burning of the Convent, the acquittal and triumph of the notorious perpetrators, the mockery of justice &c &c ought to be kept up weekly in Italy, Germany, and France for at least a year. It will do more than if we were writing here for half a century. The very Cicerones in all the cities ought to be taught to ask Americans,- as if what in Ireland is called "by way of no harm,"- Are you from the place where they burned the Convent and persecute Catholics? "*"

Two years after the attack on the convent in Massachusetts an outbreak was averted in Charleston, South Carolina. The report had spread that a colored nun had been admitted into a French convent in that city. The bishop, upon investigation, found this to be true. Recognizing the illegality of her position and the danger of mob violence, he immediately ordered that she should leave the diocese. It was not the fault of Bishop England that six months later she still remained in the convent. Like the Bishop of

* Bishop England to Dr. Cullen, Charleston, 20th June 1835. (From the archives of the Irish College in Rome.), in Am. Cath. Hist. Soc., (1897), Records, VIII, p. 214

New Orleans, he was "tired of half-wild nuns." He "looked upon" the founder of that particular religious community "to be touched in the head, and the whole establishment to be mischievous in this place."*

No single incident of this kind is in itself of importance. Each was precipitated by a local occurrence. Each was a spontaneous expression of local feeling. Taken together, as illustrations, they serve to show the growing antagonism between Catholics and Protestants in the chief eastern cities. In the south and west where as yet the stream of Catholic immigration had not reached, there were no mob attacks, and few indications of ill feeling between the two religions are to be noted. How then account for these manifestations in the east? Catholics even in the larger cities were still a small minority of the population. Fear of their influence could not be solely due to weight of numbers. Was opposition based purely upon traditional hatred of the Catholic religion? Or were there fundamental differences

* Bishop England to Dr. Cullen, Charleston, S.C. February 23, 1836. Ibid, VIII, p. 230

between Catholic and Protestant which would prevent political amalgamation? These and similar questions presented themselves to the serious minds of that day. The Jacksonian period was an era of partisanship in politics and in religion. Through public discussions, and through the press, people were kept informed upon political and religious questions. Bishop England remarked that in America "everybody reads the daily or weekly papers while the reading of books is not so common." It was in keeping with the age that questions at issue between Catholic and Protestant should be kept before the public by means of open debate and published controversy. The first important public discussion was opened in Philadelphia by a sermon of Rev. John Hughes on the Catholic Emancipation Bill in 1829. Father Hughes, who shortly after became Bishop of New York, was even then the most skillful debater and most gifted politician in the Catholic Church. His sermon and the other articles setting forth the Catholic side of the controversy were published in the United States Gazette. The Protestant position was maintained by an Episcopalian, Rev. Mr. Delancey in the Church Register, the organ

of the Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.* In New England the discussions took the form of public lectures, Bishop Fenwick presenting the Catholic side and Lyman Beecher stating the Protestant view.** In 1832 Father Hughes took part in another debate in Philadelphia, being answered by Rev. Dr. Breckinridge, one of the most eminent Presbyterian theologians in the country.*** The same year, a Presbyterian editor in New York undertook to answer two Catholic priests, the Rev. Dr. Power, Vicar-General of the diocese, and Rev. Felix Varela who later succeeded to that office. All of these controversial discussions were published in the religious periodicals. In Philadelphia the Protestant view appeared in the Methodist weekly, the Christian Advocate. The Catholics through the energy and foresight of Father Hughes were by that time provided with their own publication, the Catholic Herald. Debates between Father Hughes and Dr. Breckenridge were repeated in

* J. R. G. Hassard, Life of the Most Reverend John Hughes, D.D. (New York, 1866), p. 92

** Shea, op. cit., 466

*** Clarke, Deceased Bishops, II, p. 84

1834 and in 1836.* The only important discussion in the west was in Cincinnati where Dr. Alexander Campbell in 1837 issued a public challenge to Bishop Purcell of that diocese.**

Opinions were at variance as to the value of such debates. Men like Lyman Beecher and Dr. Breckinridge would have felt it a flagrant neglect of duty to evade the opportunity of meeting a religious opponent. The same view was held by Father Hughes, the representative contestant of the Catholic clergy. Bishop Kenrick on the other hand had some misgivings on the subject. His position is made clear in the following extract from a letter written in 1843 to the Rector of the Irish College in Rome: " You may have heard of a challenge given me to a public discussion by the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Vermont, Dr. Hopkins. I declined an oral debate and offered to correspond through the Press which he declined.

* Extracts from United States Gazette, 1834-1836, in Am. Cath. Hist. Researches, (1896), XIII, p. 142

** The Missions of the United States in 1838, (From Annals of Propagation of Faith, Sept., 1838), in Am. Cath. Hist. Researches, (1891), VIII, p. 171

I should be glad to know from you whether the prohibition to hold public discussions - - - regards this country. It formed my chief difficulty, but independently of it, I think the vituperation usual on such occasions is more injurious to Religion than the vindication of truth can be useful."*

Whatever might be said of their advisability, these discussions were an established practice of the day. They were thoroughly in keeping with the democratic conviction that each man had the right, nay, was under obligation to express his full and free conviction upon subjects in which he felt an interest. From religious or political leaders an authoritative utterance was expected. These religious controversies hold a two-fold relation to contemporary events. On the one hand they may be considered as among the influences which intensified the feeling of hostility between Protestant and Catholic; on the other, they serve as an illustration of the reviving

* Bishop Kenrick to Dr. Cullen, Philadelphia, March 28, 1843, in Am. Cath. Hist. Soc. (1896), Records, VII, p. 309

interest in religion which accompanied and was part of the humanitarian movement of the late thirties. Without attempting to force the connection between religion and politics, it is worth noting that the most animated discussions took place in two chief centers of political strife, New York and Philadelphia, during the election years of 1832 and 1836.

The subjects chosen for public discussion bear out the inference that antagonism between Protestant and Catholic rested upon a basis of political hostility. Theological questions were considered subordinate, if not irrelevant. Controversy centered upon the question, "Is the Roman Catholic religion, in any or in all of its principles or doctrines, inimical to civil or religious liberty?"* Constitutional theory to the contrary, it was an accepted belief of the time that religion and politics were closely interrelated, that men holding certain religious connections were predisposed toward a corresponding form of civil government. This principle was acknowledged as

* De Courcy, Catholic Church in the United States, p. 411.

fundamental. Two contemporary writers holding opposite opinions upon the results of its application to Roman Catholics may be quoted as evidence. De Tocqueville writes: "By the side of every religion is to be found a political opinion, which is connected with it by affinity. If the human mind be left to follow its own bent, it will regulate the temporal and spiritual institutions of society in a uniform manner; and man will endeavor, if I may so speak, to harmonize earth with heaven."* A Protestant partisan says: "I have nothing to do with the purely religious character of the Roman Catholic sect. - - - But every religious sect has certain principles of government growing out of its particular religious belief, and which will be found to agree or disagree with the principles of any given form of government."**

The political nature of the hostility toward Roman Catholics may be more easily detected in the two works above cited, than from the clerical discussions where theological arguments were apt to

* De Tocqueville, op. cit., I, p. 383

** S. F. B. Morse, Foreign Conspiracy against the Liberties of the United States, (New York, 1835), p. 33

intrude. The charges may be stated thus:

(1) That the papal theory of government is inconsistent with the Protestant ideal of liberty of the press, of religious and political freedom;

(2) That this conclusion is confirmed by observation of papal influence in the Catholic countries of Europe;

(3) That Catholics everywhere act together as if guided by one mind;

(4) That Catholics in America are tolerant and republican only because they are too small a body to act out their principles, and that insofar as they are tolerant, they are not true Catholics;

(5) That, claiming the advantages of religious toleration, Catholics are secretly working toward its destruction in the United States;

(6) That this is to be accomplished by aid from foreign governments;

(7) That the Holy Alliance fearing the "silent but powerful and increasing influence" of American institutions on European countries is trying to destroy trans-Atlantic liberty;

(8) That this is to be accomplished under the

guise of extending Catholic influence in the United States;

(9) That foreign Missionary Societies, especially the Leopold Foundation, are political in their nature;

(10) That foreign influence can only come into the United States by means of Catholics "who work with the minds and the funds of all despotic Europe."

(11) That Catholics form "a regular party, a religious sect ready to throw the weight of its power as circumstances may require, ready to favor any man, or set of men who will engage to favor it."

(12) That in European countries "Catholics do use the bonds of religious union to effect political objects," and that under the organization of their priests they may do so in the United States.*

By many sincere people these statements were believed to be true. Reduced to lowest terms they reveal characteristic features of Jacksonian Democracy; an overwhelming pride in things American, combined with a jealous fear of European aristocracy.

* Morse, Brutus, p. 33, passim

De Tocqueville held to the opposite opinion, and considered the fear of Catholic influence on democratic institutions without genuine foundation. Comparing Catholics in the United States with their co-religionists in Europe, he estimated the reciprocal influence of American institutions upon Roman Catholics of greater importance. He says: "The Catholic religion has erroneously been regarded as the enemy of democracy. - - - At the present moment more than a million of Christians professing the truths of the Church of Rome are to be found in the Union. These Catholics are faithful to the observances of their religion; they are fervent and zealous in the belief of their doctrines. Yet they constitute the most republican and the most democratic class in the United States."* De Tocqueville admits that in Europe the Catholic influence had not generally been favorable to democratic movements. He even suggests that the ideal of democracy is not in accord with fundamental Catholic doctrine; but the beneficent influence of democratic institutions in America, he

* De Tocqueville, op. cit., I, p. 384

feels, is destined to remove this incompatibility. He goes on to say: "But no sooner is the priesthood entirely separated from the government, as is the case in the United States, than it is found that no class of men are more naturally disposed than the Catholics to transfer the doctrine of the equality of condition into the political world. - - - If then the Catholic citizens of the United States are not forcibly led by the nature of their tenets to adopt democratic and republican principles at least they are not necessarily opposed to them; and their social position, as well as their limited number, obliges them to adopt these opinions. Most of the Catholics are poor, and they have no chance of taking a part in the government unless it be open to all the citizens. They constitute a minority, and all rights must be respected in order to insure them the free exercise of their own privileges. These two causes induce them, even unconsciously, to adopt political doctrines which they would perhaps support with less

* Ibid, I, p. 384

zeal if they were rich and preponderant.**

Catholic leaders emphatically repudiated the political motives ascribed to them. They disavowed all connection with the political systems of Europe, and affirmed their loyal devotion to the basic principles of American democracy. They appealed to popular sentiment by claiming the constitutional right of equal opportunity for all men and for all religions. The relation of American Catholics to the papacy was thus defined: "No man of common intelligence or information need be told - - - that the obedience we owe to the Pope is confined entirely to religion and spiritual things; and that he neither claims, nor we allow any jurisdiction in matters affecting our civil allegiance."**

Before striking a balance as to the consensus of public opinion, evidences of the good feeling existing between Protestants and Catholics must be taken into account. The instances here cited may be

* Ibid, I, p. 385

** M. J. Spalding, *Miscellanea*, (Louisville, 1855), Introduction, XLII

considered as typical. Official thanks were conveyed to the Sisters of Charity for their services during the cholera epidemic of 1833 in Baltimore and in Philadelphia.* Bishop Hughes and Dr. Breckinridge appealed from the same platform for aid for Polish refugees.** At the close of the discussion between Dr. Campbell and Bishop Purcell "each of the disputants expressed the strongest sentiments of attachment to their common country.*** More convincing is the official report to the Society of the Propagation of the Faith in 1838: "In my opinion," says the writer, "the public mind will never be more favorably disposed toward the Catholic religion than at the present moment."**** These citations might be indefinitely multiplied. Those given above suffice to show that antipathy to Catholics, though undoubtedly in the increase was by no means universal. Popular

* Niles' Register, June 1, 1833, XLIV, p. 226

** Extracts from U. S. Gazette, Am. Cath. Hist. Researches, (1896), XIII, p. 141

*** Annals Propagation of Faith, Sept., 1838, in Am. Cath. Hist. Researches, (1891), VIII, p. 171

**** Letter of Dr. Eccleston, Archbishop of Baltimore, to the Committee of the Propagation of the Faith, Paris, Baltimore, January 31, 1838, in Am. Cath. Hist. Researches, (1892), IX, p. 140

sentiment, on the contrary, was strongly in favor of the national principle of equal opportunity for all religious faiths.

Yet it must be conceded that the forces which later culminated in the Native American and Know-nothing movements were already at work during this earlier period. Economic, emotional, and political development increased their intensity. A careful study of the relations of Irish Catholics to the political parties during this first period of Catholic advance, may explain the anomaly of a politico-religious party in American history. The key to the Know-nothing movement is to be found, if any where, in the political mêlée of the Jacksonian era.

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